

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ACDA-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-07 IO-13
L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-05 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CU-04 HA-05 /085 W
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O P 021540Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3873
INFO USDEL MBFR VIENNA PRIORITY
USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY ROME
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR
SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BELGRADE 8548

FOR EUR/RPM AND EUR/SOV AND ACDA FROM USDEL CSCE

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: CSCE, OCON
SUBJ: BELGRADE CSCE (CBMS): NATO CAUCUS DISCUSSION OF SOVIET
PROPOSAL TO LIMIT MANEUVER SIZE

REF: A) STATE 283179, B) USNATO 11905

1. NATO CBMS CAUCUS MET DECEMBER 1 AND DISCUSSED, INTER ALIA,
SOVIET PROPOSAL TO LIMIT SIZE OF MANEUVERS. TURKEY AND ICELAND
WERE ABSENT. ALL REPS EXCEPT THOSE OF LUXEMBOURG, WHO DIDN'T
SPEAK, AND FRANCE REPORTED DESIRE, OR AT LEAST READINESS, OF
THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO MAKE SOME POSITIVE RESPONSE TO SOVEIT
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PROPOSAL. MOST FAVORED THIS ONLY IN RETURN FOR SOVIET
CONCESSIONS ON PROPOSALS OF INTEREST TO WEST.

2. ITALIAN REP SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS READY TO ACCEPT
SOVIET PROPOSAL AS PART OF A PACKAGE DEAL INVOLVING ALLIED
CMB PROPOSAL AND/OR ALLIED DESIDERATA IN OTHER AREAS,
PARTICULARLY HUMAN RIGHTS. IT WAS PREPARED TO DO THIS

EVEN AT SOME "SACRIFICE" IN MILITARY FLEXIBILITY, AS LONG AS "ESSENTIAL" NATO MILITARY INTERESTS WERE NOT JEOPARDIZED. IT RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, THAT ACCEPTING SOVIET PROPOSAL COULD PAVE WAY FOR OTHER MEASURES WHICH WOULD RESTRICT MILITARY ACTIVITY, SUCH AS THOSE PROPOSED BY ROMANIANS. BELGIAN (REVERSING TENTATIVE POSITION TAKEN IN EARLIER DISCUSSIONS), PORTUGUESE, GREEK AND DUTCH REPS ALL REPORTED READINESS OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO AGREE TO A SUITABLE PACKAGE ARRANGEMENT.

3. NORWEGIAN REP EXPRESSED HIS GOVERNMENT'S STRONG SUPPORT FOR SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT AND SAID ALLIES SHOULD BEGIN TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE TRADEOFFS WITH EAST, INCLUDING IDEA OF FAVORABLE REFERENCE TO SOVIET PROPOSAL IN CONCLUDING DOCUMENT IN RETURN FOR PRIVATE SOVIET COMMITMENT TO BEGIN SERIOUSLY TO DISCUSS WESTERN STABILIZING PROPOSALS IN MBFR. DANISH REP SAID HIS GOVERNMENT FAVORED POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD SOVIET PROPOSAL BUT FELT IT SHOULD BE ADOPTED IN MBFR AS A LEGALLY BINDING RESTRICTION; HOWEVER, IT HAD NO SPECIFIC VIEWS ABOUT HOW THE ISSUE MIGHT BE TRANSFERRED FROM CSCE TO MBFR.

4. DRAWING ON REF A, WHICH HE NOTED HAD BEEN DRAFTED BEFORE RECEIPT OF FINAL IMS ANALYSIS (REF 2) OF THE MILITARY IMPLICATIONS, US REP SAID US FAVORED "SIMPLE BUT FAVORABLE REFERENCE" TO SOVIET MANEUVER PROPOSAL IN CONFIDENTIAL

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CONCLUDING DOCUMENT BUT WITHOUT QUID PRO QUO COMMITMENT ON MBFR PROPOSED BY NORWEGIANS. HE SAID US BELIEVED THIS COULD ADVANCE WESTERN INTERESTS IN VIENNA TALKS WITHOUT RISKING UNDESIRABLE LINKAGE, EXPLICIT OR IMPLICIT, BETWEEN THE TWO NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID US WISHED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT DETAILS OF SOVIET PROPOSAL BEFORE GOING BEYOND NONCOMMITAL COMMENTS IN SWB. FRG REP ENDORSED EACH OF THESE POINTS. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS WORKING UP AN ALTERNATIVE VERSION OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL WHICH HE EXPECTED TO HAVE NEXT WEEK.

5. UK REP REITERATED LONDON'S VIEW THAT SOVIET PROPOSAL SHOULD BE GIVEN SERIOUS ALLIED CONSIDERATION ONLY IF SOVIETS WERE WILLING TO GIVE ALLIED CBMS PROPOSAL EQUALLY SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. HE SAID UK HAS CONSIDERED LATEST IMS ASSESSMENT BUT GAVE MORE WEIGHT TO SHAPE VIEWS AND CONCLUDED THAT ANY DEGRADATION OF TRAINING WHICH ACCEPTANCE OF 60,000 LIMIT WOULD ENTAIL WOULD BE "SLIGHT".

6. CANADIAN REP SAID HIS GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZED SOVIET PROPOSAL AS MORE AN ARMS CONTROL MEASURE THAN A CBM BUT FELT THAT IT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT IN

SOME WAY IN CONCLUDING DOCUMENT, PREFERABLY BY
NOTING ITS INTEREST BUT STATING THAT IT SHOULD BE
NEGOTIATED IN AN APPROPRIATE ARMS CONTROL FORUM. THIS WOULD
NOT BE THE SOVIET-PROPOSED "SPECIAL JOINT CONSULTATIONS",

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TO WHICH OTTAWA IS RESOLUTELY OPPOSED.

7. FRENCH REP SAID FRANCE REMAINS OPPOSED TO MANEUVER
SIZE LIMIT: AS A RESTRICTION ON MILITARY ACTIVITY IT
WOULD BE BEYOND THE COMPETENCE OF CSCE TO NEGOTIATE; AND
HOWEVER BENIGN ITS PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE MIGHT BE WITH
CEILING SET AT 60,000, IT WOULD ESTABLISH PRECEDENT FOR
MORE STRINGENT MEASURES WHICH COULD IMPINGE UPON SECURITY.
OTHER ALLIES POINTED OUT THAT PRECEDENT ARGUMENT COULD AS
WELL APPLY TO ACCEPTANCE OF NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS IN
FINAL ACT, SINCE AT SOME MANPOWER THRESHOLD NOTIFICATION
TOO WOULD BECOME UNACCEPTABLE. IN REPLY TO QUESTION FROM

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US, FRENCH REP SAID HE HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT WHETHER FRENCH OPPOSITION WOULD EXTEND TO ALTERNATIVES INVOLVING SOMETHING LESS THAN OUTRIGHT RESTRICTION ON MANEUVER SIZE BUT SAID HE THOUGHT IT PROBABLY WOULD.

8. NOTING EXTENT OF INTEREST IN "TRADING", FRENCH REP ASKED WHETHER ALLIES INTENDED TO CONTINUE TO ACT ON BASIS OF CONSENSUS, OR AT LEAST NOT TO BEGIN TO PURSUE INDEPENDENT PATHS IN NEGOTIATION UNTIL CAUCUS REACHED CONSENSUS THAT NO CONSENSUS WAS POSSIBLE ON SUBSTANCE. ALL REPS AFFIRMED INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO BE RULED BY CONSENSUS, ALTHOUGH EVENTUAL SOLUTION MIGHT BE FOR DELEGATION OPPOSED TO COURSE FAVORED BY THE REST TO REMAIN SILENT IN SWB AND CORRIDOR DISCUSSIONS, AS NORWEGIAN REP NOTED US HAD DONE ON ISSUE OF MOVEMENTS NOTIFICATION AT GENEVA.

9. CAUCUS BRIEFLY REVIEWED STATEMENTS MADE BY WARSAW PACT REPS IN PRECEDING WEEK'S DISCUSSION OF CBMS AND CONCLUDED THAT, WHILE THEY HAD LEFT DOOR OPEN TO SOME STRENGTHENING OF CBMS BY EXPRESSING "INTEREST" IN UNSPECIFIED ELEMENTS OF NEUTRAL/NONALIGNED PROPOSAL, THEY HAD GIVEN NO CLEAR INDICATION OF WHAT SPECIFICALLY THEY MIGHT BE PREPARED TO TRADE FOR WESTERN CONCESSION OF SOVIET MANEUVER PROPOSAL. IT WAS AGREED IT WOULD BE TACTICAL ERROR TO SHOW TOO GREAT INTEREST IN SOVIET PROPOSAL BEFORE SOVIETS AND THEIR ALLIES SHOWED MORE OF THEIR OWN HAND, EVEN IF ALLIED CONSENSUS WOULD PERMIT THIS.

10. COMMENT. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF A JOINT ALLIED POSITION ON SOVIET MANEUVER PROPOSAL WILL DEPEND FIRST UPON CLARIFICATION OF JUST WHAT KIND OF "POSITIVE" TREATMENT OF THE PROPOSAL WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE AND DESIRABLE (THE PROMISED FRG TEXT MAY HELP IN THIS RESEPECT) AND AGREEMENT
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ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE SOUGHT FROM THE SOVIETS AS PART OF A PACKAGE DEAL. THAT WILL LEAVE THE FRENCH PROBLEM. PERSUADING THE FRENCH TO SHOW SOME FLEXIBILITY, IF IT CAN BE DONE AT ALL, MAY WELL REQUIRE HIGH-LEVEL DEMARCHES IN PARIS.
GOLDBERG

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